



Assemblyman
**JOSEPH D.
MORELLE**

Reports to the People

SUMMER 2012

In 2012, New York continued on the right path

Dear Neighbor,

Two consecutive balanced, on-time budgets and a host of fundamental reforms have defined the past two legislative sessions in Albany.

While economic and fiscal challenges certainly remain, the outlook for the Empire State has not been this bright in many years.

After the landmark changes of 2011, including a property tax cap, adoption of new ethics standards for state officials and middle class tax relief, some wondered whether we could sustain that pace in 2012.

And yet New York moved forward on economic development, state pension reform, accountability in our public schools and the expansion of our DNA criminal database.

I have also advanced my legislative agenda, which includes providing health care options for college students, helping people access life insurance benefits, creating new jobs and improving public safety.

I hope you will find this newsletter informative, and as always please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

My best wishes to you and your family for a wonderful and safe summer!

Warmest personal regards,

Inside:

Keeping Faith with Taxpayers.....2

*Holding the Line on Spending, Taxes
Creating New Jobs*

A Healthier New York.....3

*Preserving Benefits for Kodak Retirees
Protecting Emergency First Responders
Restoring Prescription Funds for Seniors
\$26M to Improve Regional Health Care*

Moving New York Forward4

*Expanding the Criminal DNA Database
Preventing Elder Abuse
Insurance Reform, Protecting Consumers*

Contacting Joe

Rochester Office

*1945 East Ridge Road
Rochester, NY 14622
585-467-0410*

morellj@assembly.state.ny.us

Albany Office

*716 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248
518-455-5373*

<http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Joseph-D-Morelle/>

Keeping faith with taxpayers, building our economy

New Yorkers know the key to a better economy is a state government that holds the line on taxes and spending.

For the second consecutive year, Governor Cuomo and lawmakers agreed on an on-time budget that does just that. The 2012-13 budget constitutes the first back-to-back spending decrease in 30 years and reduces projected deficits to the lowest level in nearly two decades.



“The 2012-13 budget constitutes the first back-to-back spending decrease in 30 years.”

Responsible budgeting alone won't solve New York's fiscal challenges, however, which is why we also enacted pension reform to save property taxpayers \$80 billion over the next 30 years.

We have also embarked on an aggressive effort to create new jobs through Governor Cuomo's New York Works program as well as the ten councils established by the governor to approach economic development from a regional perspective.

I was honored to be appointed to the Finger Lakes regional council in June, and look forward to working with community leaders like Danny Wegman and University of Rochester President Joel Seligman to revitalize the local and Upstate economies. Only through a prosperous private sector will we find long-term solutions to the fiscal issues confronting Albany and New York's taxpayers.

Promise of new, high-paying jobs is kept at Eastman Business Park

Just two years ago, I joined with Greater Rochester Enterprise and state officials to announce 250 hi-tech jobs at Eastman Business Park, courtesy of three firms eager to locate in Rochester.

I recently visited the offices of Intrinsic Materials, Omni ID and Quintel, now under the management of Trillium International, and was greatly impressed by the contributions these businesses are making to our economic landscape.

None of this would have happened without cooperation between the private and public sectors, united in the effort to aggressively market our region's assets. This is an example of the kind of success story we must continue to write, here and across New York.

Joe with Trillium International's José Coronas, Greater Rochester Enterprises's Mark Peterson, and Kodak's Brad Kruchten during a recent tour at Eastman Business Park.



A healthier New York

Albany acts to preserve Eastman Kodak retirees' health care

Eastman Kodak's declaration of bankruptcy earlier this year sent shock waves across our region. Once the center of our economy, Kodak is now struggling to reposition itself for survival.

Concerned that bankruptcy might lead to termination of retiree health benefits, I authored legislation making it possible for Kodak retirees to buy

affordable health care as the result of a competitive bidding process.

As chairman of the Assembly's Committee on Insurance, I am honored to help these retirees enjoy a retirement free from fears about their health or their financial well-being.

Bill protects emergency workers injured while in the line of duty

In 2006, volunteer firefighter Jim Gallaher was severely injured by a hit-and-run driver while on duty. A loophole in insurance law regarding accidents with uninsured or underinsured drivers left him uncovered to face his costly ordeal.

That's why I sponsored a bill (A. 10090), passed unanimously by the Legislature, ensuring that first responders have the insurance they need.



Joe is joined by area first responders as he announces unanimous passage of a bill providing volunteer fire and ambulance crews with the insurance they need for on-the-job injuries.

"Special thanks to Jim Gallaher and all those like him who sacrifice for us all, each and every day." - Assemblyman Joe Morelle

Funding restored for seniors' EPIC prescription program



I am pleased to report that the Legislature and Governor Cuomo restored \$30 million for the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Program (EPIC) in the 2012-13 budget.

It was a particular honor to sit on the subcommittee that reached this agreement on behalf of the 280,000 people who depend on the EPIC program.

Even at a time of hard choices, we must always preserve programs that serve our most vulnerable and deserving citizens.

Coalition gets \$26M federal grant for regional health care project



For the past year I've chaired a coalition of community leaders designing a new model for local health care, in the hope we might secure a grant under the federal Affordable Care Act.

The result? A \$26.6 million grant, the largest awarded in the US.

Administered by the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, this grant will make health care more accessible and affordable, especially at the primary care level, for all the residents of the greater Rochester area. My thanks to all involved!

Moving New York forward

Expanding criminal DNA database puts New York at the forefront

New York now has the nation's most extensive criminal DNA database, drawing samples from both felony and misdemeanor offenders.

DNA is an essential crime fighting tool, which is why I continue to sponsor a bill requiring samples from all those charged with violent felonies. The power of science can identify the guilty and exonerate the innocent, and it is essential that we equip law enforcement with all the tools science can provide.

By doing so, we make the difficult job of justice a little easier.



Joe with District Attorney Sandra Doorley and Betsy McCabe, whose daughter's killer would not have been found without DNA evidence.

New law would protect seniors from abuse by their caregivers

A shocking number of senior citizens suffer abuse at the hands of those who are there to protect and help them.

I've sponsored a bill (A. 9764) expanding the definition of "caregiver" so penalties for elder abuse will apply even to unpaid volunteers and family members as well as professionals.

Our senior citizens have given so much; we have an obligation to keep them safe and protect their rights at all times.

Insurance bills support life policy beneficiaries, college students

I am particularly proud of two insurance bills passed by the Legislature in 2012.

A. 9845 requires insurers to make good-faith efforts to pay life insurance benefits even if no claim is made; A. 10577 allows private colleges to self-insure student health care, often the less costly alternative.

As Assembly insurance chair, I am always working to control cost and provide greater consumer protection for all New Yorkers.

In the community



Joe honors Angelo and Kim Collazo of Irondequoit, here with Irondequoit High School student and volunteer Galina Kreminskaya, who have devoted themselves to defeating Osteogenesis Imperfecta, which claimed the life of their daughter, Alle Shea.

The advocacy group Autism Speaks recently awarded Joe for his landmark bill making health insurance far more accessible for families dealing with an autism diagnosis. The law takes effect Nov. 1.

